

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-02) today announced his support for the final health care reform legislation that will come before the House for a vote on Sunday, March 21.

“I have decided to support the health reform legislation because it represents an historic opportunity to make health care more accessible and affordable now and into the future,” Bishop said. “I base this decision not on what is popular, but on what I believe is in the best interest for Georgia’s Second Congressional District both in the short and long-term.

“Throughout this process, I have solicited the views of people both supporting and opposing health care reform. I have heard from doctors and patients, small business owners and the CEOs of large corporations, as well as residents of rural and urban areas. I also have heard from the healthy and the sick, the young and the old, and the rich and the poor. I thank each of you who shared your views with me, and I have listened to your opinions.

“In my district there are more than 83,000 uninsured residents who will receive health insurance coverage under this bill. There are 14,500 uninsured individuals who have a pre-existing medical condition such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes and who will now no longer be denied affordable health insurance coverage. In addition, there are 12,100 small business owners in my district who will qualify for tax credits to help employees afford health care.

“My district is also home to 96,000 senior citizens who will benefit from a stronger Medicare program whose solvency is extended to 2026. There are 6,600 Medicare beneficiaries who will now be able to afford their prescription drugs with the closure of the Part D ‘donut hole.’ And, through the health care reform bill, 181,000 households in Southwest Georgia could qualify for tax credits to purchase health insurance through Medicaid, employer sponsored insurance, or other acceptable coverage. For these people and for millions of Americans like them, I have decided to support the health care reform bill.

“Some people have asked how I could be a fiscally conservative Blue Dog Democrat and still support the health reform bill. I do not know how I could be a Blue Dog Democrat and not support this bill. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, the bill will reduce the deficit by \$138 billion over the next 10 years and \$1.2 trillion in the decade after that. It includes tough provisions attacking waste and fraud in the Medicare and Medicaid programs, including some proposed by Republicans. It will slow the growth in health care costs that are becoming an increasing burden on families, businesses, and governments. And the legislation will benefit rural America by boosting mandatory funding for community health centers by \$11 billion over five years and making significant investments in the training of primary care doctors.

“This bill is not perfect. We cannot, however, let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Nor can we allow fear, misinformation, political motivation and partisanship to prevent us from taking the necessary steps to improve our health care system. I believe that we have a moral obligation to ensure that all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, geography, or income, receive the health care they need to lead healthy and productive lives.

Bishop Announces Support for Health Care Reform Bill

Friday, March 19, 2010

“As a man of faith, I know that Jesus taught us to provide and care for others, especially the ‘least of these’ who often have few advocates. In addition, when I ask myself, ‘What would Jesus do if he represented the Second Congressional district, and had the opportunity to vote to enable more than 32 million uninsured Americans to receive health insurance?’ I believe He would take care of this immediate need of the people – not let them fend for themselves while we start over or do nothing. This legislation goes a long way toward living up to this moral principle, and I am proud to support it.”

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